

To: Education Interim Committee
c/o Connie Steffen,
Policy Analyst
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

From: Kim Knettles
Salt Lake City School District

Re: Follow-up Comments to July 17 Interim Session

What are the elements that contribute to high student achievement?

Highly effective teachers teaching clearly stated, rigorous standards requiring students' mastery of deep conceptual knowledge with the belief from stakeholders that all students can meet these standards as well as the willingness to commit the time and resources necessary for them to do so.

- Highly effective teachers:
 - Extensive knowledge of the content
 - Successful at delivering that content so students develop deep conceptual knowledge
- Rigorous Standards – Utah Core
 - 21st Century Skills that require critical thinking not recalling facts and details
 - Expectations are made clear to all stakeholders – most especially students
- Support from all stakeholders to help students meet these standards by providing time and resources
 - Resources need to be aligned to support learning – learner centered
- **Time**
 - A lot of research supports that all students can learn material as long as they are provided with opportunities to see it in multiple and a variety of ways
 - Need opportunity to demonstrate deep conceptual learning and to show that they can apply that learning to real world contexts
 - Teachers need to have the time to collaborate
Doctors/Lawyers
 - Extended Day/Year

*PLEASE NOTE: Extended School Year is **not** year round school. In a year round school system, school years are staggered in order to facilitate a greater number of students in a limited space. Students still go to school 180 days. An extended school year extends the number of days students attend school to 200 – 220 days. This extended instructional time provides teachers and students the opportunity to ensure that students have mastered required skills.

****Most importantly time to “settle in” and implement curriculum without having to switch to something new before having the chance to reap benefits of current curriculum – furthermore costly and time consuming and takes much need resources that could directly affect learning

With tight budgets, what do you think is the single most important thing to invest money in?

Professional Development – no one factor affects student achievement like the capacity of the teacher.

I certainly do not want to give the impression that I would love to have class size increased. Smaller classes do allow for more individualized instruction. However it has been shown that the magic number for truly significant benefits is a student/teacher ratio of 16/1. Given our student population and monetary commitments to education, this obviously is not an option. As was demonstrated by the data presented by the State Board of Education, decreasing this ratio by even 3 students per classroom would mean hiring a substantial number of additional teachers and constructing new buildings. **Directing funds towards professional development specifically targeted at increasing teachers’ content knowledge as well as efficacy of transferring that knowledge to students would go much further towards increasing student learning.**